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REPORT: Wilby fails 7 out of 7 standard categories

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upating its mission statement to elibrate vague language cited by the committee of visiting educators that toured the school last year, he said.

"They've outlined what we need to do and we've already been working on it," Sneed said. "Some things have already been fixed."

Established in 1885, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges is the nation's oldest regional accrediting institution, serving some 1,800 public and private schools, colleges and universities.

The association lists 641 member secondary schools — more than 95 percent of those in the six-state region. Twenty-three of those schools are on probation for failing short in at least one category. Wilby is the only one to fail short in all seven.

Gray-Bennett stopped short of saying Wilby is close to losing accreditation, but she called seven an "alarming number."

"There's great pressure on them to make significant progress," she said. "They have a great deal to demonstrate ... Most people don't have as many problems."

The accreditation process has long been used to gauge whether high schools are meeting the needs of students and preparing them to further their education or enter the working world. In rare cases, a school's status can be a factor in whether a student is accepted to a college or university, Gray-Bennett said. The schools are judged for their curriculum, instruction, methods of assessing students, leadership and organization, school resources, community resources, and mission and expectation for student learning.

At Wilby, the association found "significant deficiencies" in all areas, according to a report sent to the school's principal, Martin Galvin.

In Wilby's curriculum, the report noted a "lack of depth and challenge ... for non-college preparatory students," as well as inadequate technology and equipment, a lack of textbooks and a lack of learning standards and course objectives.

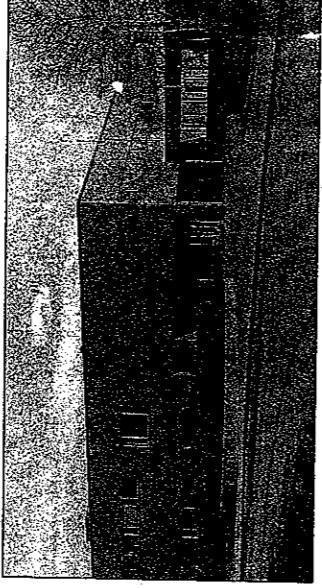
In leadership and organization, the report cited a "lack of vision and educational leadership," a perception that teachers are left out of the deci-

slion-making process, and a lack of acknowledgement for teacher accomplishments.

Sneed initially downplayed Wilby's status when questioned by the Republican-American on Wednesday, saying it is "not unusual" for a school to be deficient in all seven areas. When pressed, however, he said that the school will have to improve, or else. "We're going to do everything from the central office to support them and their leadership, but if they can't get it done, we'll just have to get rid of them and get new leadership up there," he said.

The principal "has taken the lead, and he has taken it seriously," Sneed added, "but we've got to get results." Galvin, whose \$108,060 salary made him the city's seventh-highest wage earner during calendar year 2001, could not be reached for comment. Waterbury's schools are on spring break this week.

Crosby, deficient in areas of curriculum, school resources and community resources, appealed its probationary status but learned in February that the appeal had been denied. The association said the school is correcting its problems — thanks in part to a special \$4 million state allocation last year for the city's public schools — but needs to do more. Recent improvements include computer installations in classrooms and a new budget process that will increase the



Wilby High School, seen here from nearby Its campus on Buckland Road, has been placed on probation. High schools are judged for their curriculum, instruction, methods of assessing of students, leadership and organization, school resources, community resources and their mission and expectation for student learning.

Bobby Sanchez / Republican-American

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Wilby, Crosby put on notice

Regional board says standards not being met

By Randel Edgar

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WATERBURY — Two of Waterbury's three public high schools have been placed on probation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges for failing to maintain standards that are thought to be key to providing a quality secondary education.

The schools, Wilby and Crosby, fell short in varying degrees of the association's standards, with Crosby found lacking in three of seven categories in which high schools are judged and Wilby deficient in all seven.

The concerns at Crosby stem largely from tight budgets that have prevented the school from replacing books and making needed building repairs, while those at Wilby extend to issues of vision and leadership, the result being a school that lacks focus and fails to meet the needs of many students.

Both schools will have to file special progress reports to show that they are addressing their weaknesses — steps that will determine whether the probationary status is lifted or drawn.

"We will monitor them," said Pamela Gray-Bennett, the association's director. "If there are considerable concerns, we just push them to make progress very quickly. Generally speaking, the school is required to demonstrate reasonable progress."

Wednesday that the schools are addressing the association's concerns on many fronts: by purchasing books and instructional supplies, repairing buildings and updating curriculum, to name a few examples. Wilby also is

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